



February 6th, 2017

Dear Members of the House Administration Committee and Congress:

I am writing to express my concern about H.R. 634, a bill that would terminate the Election Assistance Commission (EAC). I would like to provide some background information and illustrate the negative consequences that eliminating the EAC would have on election administration in the United States.

The EAC was established in 2002 (after Florida 2000) under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) with the specific mandate to accredit voting system test laboratories and certify voting equipment, marking the first time the federal government has offered these services to the states.

Colorado has had commissioners from both political parties appointed to the EAC over the years and the current commissioners have served with incredible distinction and have provided authentic leadership in a bi-partisan manner throughout their tenure. The EAC runs the testing and certification program in a transparent manner, releasing voting system test plans and reports for the public to review and posting detailed information about the voluntary voting system guidelines, program policies, and related correspondence. This is critical to ensuring that voting systems are accessible, secure, transparent, and standards are consistent across the country.

Further, the EAC provides election management resources and assistance to state and local election administrators by issuing guidance, advisories, and best practices and this work has become one of their top priorities. Additionally, the EAC is also responsible, under the Help America Vote Act, for collecting information about election administration issues and sharing that information with Congress, election officials and the public. This includes reports commissioned by the EAC, information about EAC research in progress, and additional elections research issued by other organizations. Datasets are also available to download as needed.

The EAC also administers federal funding to improve the administration of elections as authorized by the Help America Vote Act. The commission also manages discretionary, competitive grant programs authorized by HAVA, including the HAVA College Program to recruit college students to serve as poll workers and the HAVA Mock Election Program, which supports activities to educate secondary students in the electoral process.

As you can see, the EAC's work is critical to ensuring that elections across the country are fair, accurate, secure, transparent, efficient, and reliable. As demonstrated in 2016 and prior, election administration is critical to the integrity of our democratic process.

The following is a summary of the potential impacts should the EAC be eliminated:

- Coming off a highly contentious presidential election year in which concerns over the security, accuracy, and integrity of the process were raised, the EAC's work has never been more important. The EAC is in the middle of writing the next set of voting system standards and that work is critical to modernizing the election process. As the voting equipment across the country ages, election officials are desperate for information and best practices on how to maintain that equipment and best practices for procuring new systems.
- During the 2016 election cycle, the EAC served as subject matter experts and the primary point of contact to a number of federal agencies and election officials. This included working with DHS, FBI,

USPS and HHS on behalf of election officials. For instance, the EAC worked directly with the Department of Homeland Security to educate them on the election process, put them in contact with state and local election officials and ensured cooperation between all parties with limited disruption to those election officials that were focused on administering the election.

- Recently, DHS declared election systems to be a part of the nation's critical infrastructure. Since that time the EAC has been working on behalf of election officials to collect information about what this designation means, how it might be implemented and to express the concerns of election officials to DHS. Moving forward the EAC will continue to push for more clarity on the designation and work to ensure the process serves election officials positively.
- Throughout the 2016 election cycle, the EAC provided best practices and guidance to secure the voting process. This included distributing FBI and DHS information regarding possible threats to the process to state and local officials in all 50 states. Additionally, the EAC produced checklists for securing various election systems and simple steps all officials could take to better secure the process.
- Additionally, the EAC is working on improving the accessibility of the voting process. EAC's grant work in this area has already led to the largest voting system vendors in the country adopting the research and concepts to improve access to the process. In the last four years, the EAC has provided nearly 8 million dollars in grant funding for various academic and elections groups to research technology improvements to better serve voters with disabilities. This work is critical as the average voting age continues to increase and new systems are being purchased by election officials.
- Finally, improving the collection and dissemination of the EAC's election data survey data is critical to election officials moving forward as they look to find efficiencies and cost savings in their operation. The survey data is in the process of being collected right now and will be released in June 2017. With over 1 million data points, the EAC's survey represents the most comprehensive set of election information available.

The EAC is a bi-partisan commission and it is appropriate for this work to remain in an environment that operates across the political spectrum, free from political agenda. I believe this is a critical public interest issue and I strongly encourage you to continue to fund and support the EAC in a meaningful way so that this vitally important work endures and the voting experience across the country continues to improve.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available should any questions arise.

Sincerely,



Amber F. McReynolds
Director of Elections, City and County of Denver, Colorado
Email: Amber.McReynolds@denvergov.org
[@AmberMcReynolds](https://twitter.com/AmberMcReynolds)